

CLAYTON-BULWER TREATY.

S P E E C H

OF

HON. ALBERT G. JENKINS

OF VIRGINIA,

ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,

Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 12, 1859.

The House being in Committee of the Whole
on the state of the Union—

Mr. JENKINS said:

Mr. Chairman: I had hoped, after the recess which both Houses have taken during the holidays, and in consideration of the short intervening period from this date to the adjournment of Congress, that debate would be confined to subjects affecting the real interests of the Republic at home, and her reputation abroad. I confess, sir, that I have been disappointed in this respect by the speech of the gentleman from Maine, [Mr. WASHBURN,] who was last upon the floor: It was, for the most part, the same old thing of slavery and anti-slavery; Lecompton and anti-Lecompton. I can see no excuse for the constant harangues upon this topic to the utter neglect of the vital interests of the Confederacy, both domestic and foreign. But, sir, so it is. If the tariff is to be raised, these gentlemen of the Republican party think the only way to enlighten themselves and the country, preparatory to so doing, is by reading long essays against the institutions of their brethren of the South. If matters affecting our foreign interests are to be acted on, they seem to think the only legitimate manner of approaching the subject is through a speech denouncing the "slave oligarchy." Like Dr. Sangrado, who persisted in his specific of "bleeding and warm water"

for all ailments, however different, so our political doctors of the Republican party dose us with anti-slavery speeches for all the ills that afflict the body politic. A remarkable point of similitude in the two cases is the pertinacity which each has displayed in adhering to their practice. Would it be hazarding too much, sir, to surmise that it was for the same reason in each case? The former, you recollect, not only made himself great and famous by it, but also found his bread and butter in it, "which," says his historian, "was of much more importance to him than the health of his patients." I think, sir, it would not be uncharitable to conclude that similar considerations have their weight with our anti-slavery agitators. I shall not consume the time which I have allotted myself for the discussion of other topics, by any further notice of the speech of the gentleman from Maine, [Mr. WASHBURN.] I merely want the country to know, in case we adjourn leaving any matters of necessary legislation unattended to, where the blame rests.

And now, sir, I revert with pleasure to the subject of our foreign relations, upon which my distinguished friend from Missouri [Mr. ANDERSON] was so felicitous in his remarks yesterday. That the foreign policy of a country like ours should constantly attract the attention of its citizens, is necessarily consequent upon the character of its free institutions. Commencing with the origin of our Govern-

ment, and coming down to the present time, no other questions have more often excited a deep interest in the public mind—more frequently drawn the line of demarkation between political parties, or had a more direct and permanent effect upon the growth and prosperity of the country, than those appertaining to our foreign relations. In subordination to this idea, the Democracy of the Union, when assembled in their last presidential convention, promulgated, among others, the following propositions :

“ *Resolved*, That there are questions connected with the foreign policy of this country inferior to no domestic question whatever. The time has come for the people of the United States to declare themselves in favor of free seas and progressive free trade throughout the world, and, by solemn manifestations, to place their moral influence at the side of their successful example.

“ 2. *Resolved*, That our geographical and political position with reference to the other States of this continent, no less than the interests of our commerce and the development of our growing power, require that we should hold as sacred the principles involved in the Monroe doctrine; their bearing and import admit of no misconstruction; they should be applied with unbending rigidity.

“ 3. *Resolved*, That the great highway which nature, as well as the assent of the States most immediately interested in its maintenance, has marked out for a free communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, constitutes one of the most important achievements realized by the spirit of modern times and the unconquerable energy of our people. That result should be secured by the timely and efficient exertion of the control which we have the right to claim over it; and no power on earth should be suffered to impede or clog its progress, by any interference with the relations it may suit our policy to establish between our Government and the Governments of the States within whose dominion it lies. We can, under no circumstances, surrender our preponderance in the adjustment of all questions arising out of it.”

Yet, notwithstanding this, we have seen the time of the last session of Congress frittered away in a useless controversy, during the pendency of which each party, by its solemn and recorded vote, conceded, so far as practical results were concerned, much for which the other contended; a controversy which, from indications thrown out during the present session, some of the combatants propose to renew; while questions of foreign policy of immediate and pressing interest demand our attention; while, sir, the very state of things contemplated in those resolutions exists. You, sir, and this House will bear me witness that we consumed the whole of yesterday in discussing dead issues in relation to Central America, while living issues, springing out of our interests in that quarter, are hourly demanding our consideration. Yes, sir, while we are talking about General Walker, and reviving the question in a personal aspect, and that, too, with reference to transactions which transpired a year ago, a British minister is negotiating a treaty in Central America; a proceeding in

which American interests will meet with about the same kindly consideration that the fable represents the doves to have received from the protecting care of the hawk. We know, too, that a British fleet, under the pretence of affording protection to that functionary, blockades the harbors of Central America, and dominates over the commerce of the world. From across the seas, the same winds which fill the sails of the “homeward-bound,” waft to our ears rumors of European alliances, the basis of which is, European interference with American affairs. I shall notice a single one of the most recent of these, which comes in a shape not to be questioned. I read, sir, the translation of an extract from a French paper, the *Courrier de Paris*, of December 14, as follows

“ It has been said for some days past, there is a project for a mixed MONARCHY for the Island of Cuba, and that of Porto Rico, which would give to those possessions an independent existence, a nationality of which they have always been deprived. It is possible, also, that in the near future Mexico—alas for her internal convulsions!—will become more calm! She can then follow their example, and an intimate alliance between the three kingdoms would suffice to protect them against the aggressions of their powerful neighbors. This plan is said to be irresistible, and Spain the first who has taken the initiative, would not hesitate a moment to put it in practice. Perhaps for herself it is not to be regretted, for she does not at present succeed in maintaining her dominion over Cuba by example, but has to attain it by a display of force which renders that rich colony a burdensome charge upon the mother country.”

So much for European rumors.

At our side we behold our sister Republic once of fair and comely form, and radiant with promise, now convulsed with the throes of a deadly revolution. It is my intention at present to call the attention of the House only to the first of these questions; the condition of Central American affairs, and more immediately as connected with the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. I hold this treaty in my hands. It is the result of what the world calls diplomacy—European diplomacy—the gist of which consists in each of the contracting parties affecting to concede and determine a great deal; using language, however, from which they subsequently prove, to their own satisfaction at least, that they concede and determine nothing.

What seems to me to be wanting at present on our part, is action, definite and specific. That action is now before the House for consideration, in the shape of a joint resolution, which reads as follows:

“ *Resolved*, That the President of the United States be requested to take such steps as may be, in his judgment, best calculated to effect a speedy abrogation of said treaty.”

I am aware, sir, that captious objection may be taken at the outset to such a proceeding on

our part, upon the ground that by so doing we should infringe the prerogatives of the President and the Senate, who, by the Constitution, are the treaty-making department of the Government. For one, sir, I would never lend my aid to any measure which I thought would violate this provision of the Constitution, either in letter or spirit. But I submit that this resolution does neither. For I hold it to be the true theory of our Government, that the popular will is the supreme law of the land, and the Senate and the President—the treaty-making power—are only one of the formulae resorted to express and carry out that will. Hence it would seem to be eminently proper that this House, the immediate representative of the people, should make known the popular will upon all occasions when, in its judgment, the necessity of the case requires it. In my humble judgment, this is one of those occasions. I shall therefore proceed to state, concisely, the grounds upon which I advocate the passage of this resolution, and, as a consequence, the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty.

My first proposition is:

That we derive no advantage whatever from the operation of this treaty.

And the history of the matter, subsequent to its ratification, will bear me out in what I say. It has accomplished for us no one of the things which was intended to accomplish.

One of the objects of the treaty, as set forth in the instrument itself, was "to consolidate the relations of amity so happily subsisting between the two countries." Instead of so doing, it has more than once threatened to capture those relations in the most serious manner. Adopted, ratified, and exchanged, in 1850, it has since that time been the fruitful source of irritations and contentions between Great Britain and this country.

Another object was to guaranty to the commerce of the world the common use of a proposed ship canal. This was rather an ostensible than a real object with our Government, though it, doubtless, lured our people into an acquiescence which they would otherwise have been slow to give. But, at all events, as the canal has never been made—and, indeed, is now pronounced impracticable by some of the very parties who proposed to construct it—the treaty is a nullity in this particular. At the principal object our Government had in view, was to prevent English interference

and English domination in Central American affairs. Not, sir, that we conceded her possessions in that quarter to be rightful, or her pretensions to be just; but because we wished to put both beyond all question by her solemn relinquishment. To do this we entered into the same engagement for ourselves; which, without doubt, was the consideration that induced Great Britain to confirm the treaty. To show that this was our object, as well as hers, I will read the first article of the treaty.

"The Government of the United States and Great Britain hereby declare that neither the one nor the other will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the said ship canal, agreeing that neither will ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same or in the vicinity thereof; or occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume, or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America; nor will either make use of any protection which either affords or may afford, or any alliance which either has or may have to or with any State or people, for the purpose of erecting or maintaining any such fortifications, or of occupying, fortifying, or colonizing Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America, or of assuming or exercising any dominion over the same; nor will the United States or Great Britain take advantage of any intimacy, or use any alliance, connection, or influence that either may possess with any State or Government, through whose territory the said canal may pass, for the purpose of acquiring or holding, directly or indirectly, for the citizens or the subjects of the one, any rights or advantages in regard to commerce or navigation through said canal, which shall not be offered on the same terms to the citizens or subjects of the other."

Yet, sir, have we not signally failed to accomplish that object on our part? Have we even approximated it? Has Great Britain relinquished a single foot of that country? Does she not occupy and exercise as much dominion as ever, over a great part of it? From the hour that treaty was ratified until this moment she has not fulfilled its plainest stipulation. She refused to do upon various pretexts, always however contriving to postpone the matter, until nearly two years had elapsed, when, as if to shock the common sense of this nation, Lord Clarendon took the position that the treaty in question was not to operate upon the existing state of things, but was only to take effect *in futuro*. Now, I shall not consume the time of the House by attempting to disprove the justness of the English construction. That construction, sir, is almost beneath criticism, for its reverse is as apparent upon the face of the treaty itself as are the signatures appended to it. Lord Clarendon's letters written to bolster up his novel construction of it are, with all his force of intellect, only so many specimens of sophistry, casuistry, and word-logic; which one would have expected rather to have emanated from the schoolmen of the middle ages, than

from a modern statesman. They were at the time completely exposed and riddled by our able Minister at the Court of St. James, now our worthy President. It was indeed almost a work of supererogation on his part, so far as it concerned the public mind of America; for I doubt whether a sane man could be found within the limits of this Republic, whose mind could be so perverted as to adopt the monstrous idea that this treaty was purely prospective in its operation, in the face of its obvious and palpable meaning to the contrary.

But, sir, so England now construes it, and what is more to the point, she acts upon this construction. The consequence is, that her illegal possessions in Central America are as extensive as ever; her Mosquito Indian protectorate as vigorous as ever; and her interference under its guise, in the affairs of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, rather more frequent than heretofore. Thus, sir, have we failed, utterly failed, in accomplishing a single purpose had in view when we negotiated this treaty.

This treaty, then, is impotent for good; hence its abrogation, even without further action on our part, could not make our case worse than it is. It would not increase the rights of Great Britain in Central America, for two reasons: One is, that she has no rights there, even aside from this treaty; hence its abrogation could revive none. True, at a very early day, but when the whole country confessedly belonged to Spain, England did pretend to set up some kind of claim to a portion of Central America, deriving it from the English pirates; but this claim she abandoned in the treaty of Paris, concluded in 1763. Having subsequently engaged in war with Spain, another treaty was concluded between the parties in 1783, by which England bound herself to leave the whole country, which, upon various pretexts, she had contrived to occupy, and to confine herself to Balize; and even there she was not to exercise eminent domain, but was to have only an usufruct for the purpose of cutting logwood and mahogany, which had before this time become articles of commerce. England, however, violated this treaty by a most petty equivocation; asserting that "*continent Espagnol*," or Spanish continent, did not include Central America. And the history of that period shows conclusively, not only that all Europe regards it as a miserable evasion amounting to a violation of good faith, but that the English Gov-

ernment itself actually contemplated it as such, and so designed it from the beginning.

But, sir, even this faint shadow of a title was lost in 1786—still another treaty having been entered into at that time between the parties, by which England gave up all her pretensions, in the fullest and most unequivocal terms; and this time, acting in good faith, abandoned her fortifications, and quit possession of the country; and it was not until, by the treaty of Gaudalupe-Hidalgo, we acquired California and New Mexico, that England, seeing the value of Central America to our people for transit purposes between our Atlantic and Pacific possessions, attempted to renew her old and exploded pretensions—pretensions which this Government has never admitted, either directly or by inference. As, then, England has no rights in Central America, except the usufruct in Balize alluded to, the abrogation of this treaty can give her none. But there is still another reason why the abrogation of this treaty could not make our case worse than it is by increasing or reviving the claims of England, and that is to be found in the fact that every possession, protectorate, or pretension of any kind which she might set up outside of this treaty, *she now asserts under it*. This is, of course, apparent, from the simple fact that she construes this treaty to be purely prospective in its operation, and as not at all affecting what she calls her existing rights.

But it may be said that, granting all this, still it would be the better policy to continue negotiations; that England will be eventually brought to adopt our construction of the treaty; which leads me, sir, to submit to the House my second proposition, which will cover this suggestion, and render it tangible for the purpose of discussion, namely—

That the history of this matter, and its present status, do not furnish even probable ground upon which to predicate the assumption that England will finally adopt our construction of this treaty.

After the ratification of this treaty, Great Britain having persisted, in spite of our remonstrances, in holding on to her Central American possessions, in themselves illegal, besides being totally set aside by the treaty referred to, our Government determined to have a conclusive settlement of the question at once, and our Secretary of State at that time, Mr. Marey, as early as July, eighteen hundred and fifty-three, transmitted full powers and instructions to our Minister at the British Court to conclude this

controversy forthwith. Mr. Buchanan, then our Minister, endeavored to do so; and frequent and lengthy conversations and correspondence were held between himself and the English Secretary for Foreign Affairs. But with all the fair promises of the latter, these efforts amounted to nothing. Some time subsequently, the matter was brought to the immediate attention of Congress and the country, by the annual message of President Pierce of December eighteen hundred and fifty-five. I shall read an extract from that message, to throw some light upon the course events were taking. He says:

"This Government, recognizing the obligations of the treaty, has of course desired to see it executed in good faith by both parties, and in the discussion, therefore, has not looked to rights which we might assert independently of the treaty, in consideration of our geographical position, and of other circumstances which create for us relations to the Central American States different from those of any Government of Europe.

"The British Government in its last communication, although well knowing the views of the United States, still declares that it sees no reason why a conciliatory spirit may not enable the two Governments to overcome all obstacles to a satisfactory adjustment of the subject.

"Assured of the correctness of the construction of the treaty, constantly adhered to by this Government, and resolved to insist on the rights of the United States, yet actuated also by the same desire which is avowed by the British Government, to remove all causes of serious misunderstandings between two nations, associated by so many ties of interest and kindred, it has appeared to me proper not to consider an amicable solution of the controversy hopeless.

"There is, however, reason to apprehend that, with Great Britain in the actual occupation of the disputed territories, and the treaty therefore practically null, so far as regards our rights, this international difficulty cannot long remain undetermined without involving in serious danger the friendly relations which it is the interest as well as the duty of both countries to cherish and preserve. It will afford me sincere gratification if future efforts shall result in the success anticipated heretofore, with more confidence than the aspect of the case permits me now to entertain."

Sir, do not subsequent events show that the last sentence of this extract from President Pierce's message was penned by a statesman whose sagacity, even at that distance of time, saw into the shuffling part that England was playing; the part of wait! wait! wait! and all the time getting the game into her own hands. Yet, sir, others were either more hopeful or more timid than President Pierce; and Congress taking no decisive steps in the matter, negotiations were continued, just as some gentlemen propose to continue them now; and with what result? Why, this message from which I have just read, penned after we had been already negotiating long enough to exhaust all probability of an agreement, is dated December, 1855, and this is January, 1859. And here we are, in relation to this matter, *just precisely where we were then*. I ask, sir, with such a record of the past, what are we to

expect from the future? Have we not been promised a settlement of this question month after month, and year after year, until the most credulous might well grow skeptical of the good faith of those who proffered it?

It is not necessary that I should point out all the various instances in which this has been done, or to trace the many miserable expedients resorted to, in order to gain delay. It will be sufficient for me to call attention to the latest manifestation we have had in that direction, and which will show exactly how the matter stands at this time. This can best be accomplished by referring to some documents sent to this body, on the 15th ultimo, by the President, in compliance with a resolution of the House of a preceding date. I have these before me; one of them comprises extracts from a letter from the American Minister at the British court at this time, to our Secretary of State; which extracts contain a synopsis of a reported conversation between the former and the Earl of Malmesbury, of the Foreign Office, during which the latter personage made the following statement:

"Lord Napier has communicated to the President the treaty negotiated by Sir William G. Ouseley with the Minister from Nicaragua. It was believed that no objection was expressed to its provisions, one of the objects of which was to terminate the Mosquito protectorate."

Sir, I can imagine the astonishment of the President, and the Secretary of State, on receiving this communication from Mr. Dallas. Why, sir, though it is represented in this statement that a treaty had been negotiated between Sir William G. Ouseley and the Nicaraguan Minister at Washington, almost under the eye of the President, and that it had been communicated to him, *this, sir, was the first the President had heard of it*.

Our Secretary of State at once dispatched a note to Lord Napier, asking a solution of the mystery. The answer of his Lordship is too good to be lost. After premising in a very elaborate manner, he comes to the point, and says:

"I conceive that what the Earl of Malmesbury intended to convey to Mr. Dallas was this: Lord Napier had imparted, verbally, to General Cass, the general sense of a projected treaty which Sir William Gore Ouseley had been instructed to negotiate with Nicaragua, one of the objects of which is to terminate the Mosquito protectorate, and to which no objection was expressed by the United States Government.

"I have not had the honor of holding any personal communication with the President on this subject. In so far as I am informed, no treaty has as yet been concluded by Sir William Gore Ouseley with any agent on the part of Nicaragua.

"I remain, my dear sir, yours very truly. NAPIER."

Sir, is not this too much? Does it need

comment? Does it not speak for itself, and bring to bear irresistible testimony to show what I have asserted, that the English Government is only tampering with us in this matter? Why, sir, the English Secretary of Foreign Affairs does not even render to our sagacity the small tribute of resorting to a respectable subterfuge in the premises. On the contrary, he seems to have taken some pains to have singled out the veriest pretext imaginable. One might almost be led to believe that the Earl of Malmesbury was a philosopher, devoted to metaphysical inquiry; and that instead of trying to settle the Central American question with this country, he was really engaged in a profound investigation to discover how far it was possible to impose upon human credulity. I ask if we are to expect anything from such diplomacy? Sir, it is not even *diplomatzizing*; it is *trifling* with us to the last degree. And with this remark, I dismiss the consideration of the second proposition which I have advanced, and which I have endeavored to establish; and I now proceed to submit the third, namely:

That this treaty, whether taken in the English or in the American sense, contravenes what ought to be the settled policy of this Government in relation to the affairs of the American continent.

That policy should be, sir, to assert not an equal, but a paramount and controlling influence over its affairs. This is popularly known as the *Monroe doctrine*. And though not precisely as enunciated by him, yet, sir, the positions he took on various occasions are fairly, legitimately, and logically deducible from the principle I have laid down, and from no other. I say, then, that in calling it the Monroe doctrine, I do so considerately, and that I am utterly regardless of the carping criticism of the historical pedant who fails to recognize the same fundamental principle whenever a difference of circumstances happens to require a modification or a different application of it.

It will be observed, sir, that the first article in this treaty, which I have already read to the House, is fatal to the policy referred to, as it binds both parties "never to occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume, or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America." Is not this deserting the high ground which our Government should take in regu-

lating the affairs of this continent? But, sir, this treaty not only concedes to Great Britain an equality with ourselves in this respect, but it does the same for every other State on the face of the globe, from the autocracies of the Czar of Russia and the Sultan of Turkey down to the humblest of the Papal States, and even to Liberia itself; for by article sixth it is provided that:

"The contracting parties in this convention engage to invite every State with which both or either have friendly intercourse, to enter into stipulations with them similar to those which they have entered into with each other."

And this, too, is all to be done upon the miserable pretext of protecting a ship canal that is never to be made; or which, if made, will be done under circumstances inauspicious to American interests. Sir, a controlling influence over Central America in particular is due to us alike from a commercial as from a political necessity. Instead of conceding, as we have done in this Clayton-Bulwer treaty, an equal control to every other State in Christendom, we should have asserted a superior and dominant control for ourselves without a treaty. In this we should have been justified by the great law of self-preservation—a law which overshadows the quibblings of writers upon international jurisprudence; a law in which Government itself has its origin in its assumption of all those powers which conflict with what we style the natural rights of man, or rights of the individual in a state of nature; powers without which there could be no such thing as government, and to account for the assumption and exercise of which the theory of universal consent, so often set up by speculative writers, is totally insufficient. The same law, which in one of its modifications, justifies a class of the community not numbering more than one-fourth of the whole race in the most liberal Republics—that is to say, males twenty-one years of age or more—in assuming to themselves every attribute of government, and regulating, by the most sovereign authority, the condition of the other three-fourths of the population. The same law which justifies the course which Europeans and their descendants have pursued towards the aborigines of this continent; a law which lies at the foundation of all order, from the simple family relation upwards to the grand structure of an organized government in successful operation; without which, as Mr. Calhoun remarks, "society itself could not exist." Look, sir, at the position of this Republic;

almost the only one worthy the name on the face of the globe ; with the monarchies of the Old World, the growth of centuries, ready to be arrayed against us in solid phalanx at a moment's notice. Observe our geographical position ; our immense possessions upon the Pacific coast ; and the necessity of our having a dominant control over Central America for transit purposes ; and tell me if we should not be justified in asserting our supremacy? And who shall say, sir, that we could not maintain it?

Another objection, sir, which I have to this treaty, and which I will bring forward here as under its appropriate head; is, that it prevents us, from all time to come, not only from acquiring any portion of Central America as a territorial appendage, but even from incorporating it as a sovereign State in our Confederacy; notwithstanding every citizen within its limits, as well as all our own, should desire it. For it is plain, sir, that the language of the first article of this treaty effectually precludes any such action on our part. Now, it may be said that the idea of such growth and expansion on our part, in the legitimate manner in which it has hitherto taken place, as to render it expedient to annex any portion of the country spoken of to our Union, is visionary, and would be unprecedented in the history of nations.

Sir, you cannot judge in this case by the past—I mean by the historical past. You can only judge *our* future by *our* past; by that past of which men now living are the cotemporaries; by that past whose achievements and discoveries in all the arts and sciences have been such as to revolutionize the world in all that appertains to the progress and development of nations and races. And judging by this past, what may we not predict for the future? From the eminence which, as a nation, we have already reached, what horizon can bound our political prospective? Already, sir, grave Senators discuss the question of a protectorate over Mexico. With a protectorate, Mexico would rapidly become Americanized in thought, feeling, interest, population, and, indeed, in everything calculated to fit her to enter our political system. I tell you, sir, that in this case absorption would prove to be the corollary of a protectorate. When you begin the one, you may prepare for the other. And Mexico once acquired, Central America would follow in the most natural manner.

For one, I am unwilling to say to the genius of American institutions, “thus far shalt thou go, and no further.” The Roman God, Terminus, is not one of my political deities, however grand he may appear in heathen mythology. I do not wish to be understood as advocating indiscriminate annexation. I might be for it under some circumstances, and opposed to it under others. I would judge each individual case of the sort as it arose, and decide it accordingly. But I say, whether we may or may not desire to incorporate any part of Central America within our political system, I do not believe that we should do, as we are made to do by this treaty, if we continue it in force, give bonds to all the world in general, and to our rival, England, in particular, that it shall *not* be so incorporated.

Was it not, then, a fatal error of shortsightedness in us to enter into this treaty for any of the reasons that influenced us? A treaty which has thrown us so far back in the race for empire? Sir, it seems marvelous, at this day, that we could have made such a treaty; and it will seem more wonderful still to the future historian. The public mind of this country was diverted from the true view of this treaty. I have already said that with this Government the proposed inter-oceanic canal, with its commercial advantages, was an ostensible, rather than a real object; but, sir, there is no concealing the fact that this consideration did operate upon the country at large, however little it may have influenced our Government. Sir, at the time this treaty was negotiated, so intensely was the public mind fixed upon our Pacific possessions, and, above all, upon the immense mineral developments in that region, which each succeeding day magnified almost beyond conception; where gold seemed to grow as in the garden of Hesperides; that this treaty, which appeared to facilitate a connection between ocean and ocean, and thereby to enable us, almost by stretching forth the hand, to seize upon the glittering treasures of the Pacific coast; left us unmindful of its ulterior political effect. And as Atlanta, though fabled for her fleetness, yet pausing a moment to grasp the golden fruit, was distanced by her competitor, so we, too, intent upon the golden treasures that suddenly dazzled our vision, have permitted a rival to stride between us and the goal of our ambition, who now threatens to distance us in the mighty race for empire.

I have endeavored, sir, to look at the question of the abrogation of this treaty calmly, and to give all due weight to such suggestions of my own mind as seemed to be obstacles to that course; but I must say, sir, in all frankness and candor, that those suggestions have not for a moment been able to outweigh, or even to poise in the balance, the important considerations of State policy that imperatively demand its abrogation.

But it is sometimes said that war would be the consequence; that we are unprepared for war, that England, with her five hundred battle-ships, would blockade our harbors, bombard our cities, and sweep our commerce from the ocean. If it has come, sir, to this, that there is potency in an argument of this character, then have we sunk, indeed, to the lowest depth of degradation; a degradation which has but one parallel in history. It is to be found in a chapter of Livy, wherein he recounts the capitulation of the Romans to the Gauls, and when the former even dared to remonstrate against the false weights of the Gauls, being thus made to pay a greater price than the treaty called for, Brennus, the Gallic chieftain, threw his sword into the scales, with the exclamation, "*Woe to the vanquished.*"

Sir, hard as this treaty was to bear, we have borne it. Dear as was the price we were to pay, as the consideration on our part, we have paid it. The price of diminished influence; the price of curtailed empire and dominion; the price of humbled pride. And now, sir, when we object to the false measure of construction that England would apply to this treaty, and which would make our burden under it greater than we could bear, we are told that war will be the consequence. Sir, be assured that such contumely will be represented in this case as in the parallel I have cited, not, indeed in the person of a Camillus, but in the proud and independent spirit of a free people. The American people will never submit to it, sir; not though England's armies were as many as her acts of aggression, and her navies more numerous than the treaties she has ruthlessly violated.

There is, sir, but one further question for attention. Can we abrogate this treaty without a violation of good faith? For myself, sir, I do not doubt it. I presume no man doubts it seriously; I have not even heard it mooted.

There can be no umpires between sovereign ties. Each must judge for itself—must be its own umpire. And, sir, as our own umpire, and trying this case *in foro conscientæ*, we could not do otherwise than justify this proceeding on our part. Above all, sir, let us act in this matter at once. Every day's delay redounds to our disadvantage. Central America would have been *Americanized* ere this had it not been for this treaty. Under its operation, and in order to carry it out, our vessels have been boarded and attached by the officers of our Government, after their decks were noisy with the tread of immigrants, their canvas already filling with the breeze, and their prows turned towards the narrow land of the tropics. Let us then at once abrogate this treaty, plant ourselves upon the Monroe doctrine; and trust to a righteous cause and the invincible spirit of our people for the consequences.

Sir, a word more, and I shall have done. The State of Virginia is about to erect, in Holywood cemetery, a monument to the memory of James Monroe. Under the supervision of her present distinguished Chief Magistrate, we may expect it to be worthy of the object it seeks to commemorate.

Let us, as the Representatives of the whole Union, imitate her example. Let us do it, sir, not by building a temple of iron or of bronze; not by developing in the marble its latent forms of grandeur and beauty; nor yet by peopling these walls, through the genius of the pencil, with images almost starting into life. But let us do it by incorporating into our foreign policy, as a fundamental principle, the doctrine already consecrated by his name. Sir, let this Administration commit itself at once and unreservedly to the Monroe doctrine. And, sir, let it enforce it. Let it do this, and it may proclaim to the world, not in the spirit of classic fancy and poetic license, but in the language of soberness and truth: "*Exegi monumentum ære perennium*;" ("I have built a monument more enduring than brass.") A monument whose majestic outlines will be visible through the reflecting-telescope of history, long after Holywood cemetery and its Gothic temple shall have been forgotten, and the very spot which is now the receptacle of the illustrious dead shall have perhaps become the habitation of the living.